JFK murder is theme of novel

NOVEMBER 22. By Bryan Woolley. Seaview. 339 Pages. $12.95,

President John F. Kennedy was shot and fatally wounded Nov. 22, 1963, the victim of an assassin's bullets.

It seems, and it was, a long time ago. But most of those who were around at that time still remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the shocking news that day.

In "November 22," Bryan Woolley takes fact and surrounds it with fiction to tell an absorbing, and tragic, story — the death of a president as seen through a novelist's eyes.

Woolley's large cest includes both real and fictional characters, but the real people — other than the president — play relatively minor roles. The bulk of the plot is settled upon Woolley's fictional creations, and a mixed bag they are. Some detest the handsome young president, others adore him, and still others have no strong feelings either way.

With so many characters populating his novel, Woolley doesn't have time nor space to more than lightly sketch in the personalities of his people. This does not detract from the narrative, since the writer is skilled enough to say what needs to be said in the fewest possible words and demonstrates an admirable economy of line.

"November 22" is a well-done example of taking fact, fictionalizing it and making it ring, unhappily, true.

Phil Thomas AP Books Editor

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